

A Look at the Do-Nothing 114th Congress

*“It may be no exaggeration to call the current, 114th Congress the worst ever.”
[Norm Ornstein, [5/17/16](#)]*

As Congress prepares to adjourn at the end of the week, it’s clear that the Republican-led 114th Congress has become yet another closed, unproductive, do-nothing Congress:

Not in session: The House has been in session for just **204 days** as of September 27, compared to 240 days in session at this same point during the Democratic-led 111th Congress.

Closed: There have been **73 closed rules** so far this Congress – which limit debate, reduce transparency, and block Members from offering amendments on legislation – compared to **37 closed rules** by the end of the Democratic-led 111th Congress.

No substance: Only **20 major pieces of legislation** have been signed into law. A total of 219 bills have been signed into law, compared to 236 bills signed into law at this same point during the Democratic-led 111th Congress. Republicans have voted **12 times** to repeal or replace the Affordable Care Act this Congress – 65 times total.

Meanwhile, House Republicans have failed to address a number of critical issues, including:

- **Providing the resources to address the Zika virus, the Flint drinking water crisis, and the ongoing opioid epidemic in the U.S.;**
- **Taking action to address gun violence in America;**
- **Taking up legislation to raise the minimum wage, secure equal pay, or offer paid sick and family leave;**
- **Addressing student debt;**
- **Putting our nation on a fiscally sustainable path;**
- **Fixing our broken immigration system; and**
- **Protecting voting rights.**

Republican leaders continue to struggle with deep division within their Conference, which have rendered them unable to accomplish even the most basic responsibilities of governing, including passing a budget:

Governing by Crisis:

“Not so long ago, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) promised that, **after years of dysfunction and infighting, 2016 would represent a new beginning...** Instead he — and McConnell, and the rest of Congress — **blew it.**” [Washington Post Op-ed, [9/26/16](#)]

“**Governing by crisis has become the norm in Congress** in recent years, but so far this year even that hasn’t happened.” [Roll Call, [4/19/16](#)]

“Almost six months into the job... [Speaker Paul] Ryan has flattered the House Freedom Caucus and pursued promises to empower rank-and-file Republicans with reforms to how the House operates — yet it’s **yielded little in the way of actual results**... Indeed, 2016...is proving to be a **virtual wasteland** on the House side.” [Politico, [4/20/16](#)]

Republicans Don’t Pass a Budget:

“This year the **House couldn’t even pass a budget resolution setting out the broad outlines** for what Congress plans to spend, which is the first step in the budget process; this is only the second year since 1975 that the House was unable to pass such a plan.” [Washington Post, [9/26/16](#)]

And instead of addressing our nation’s most pressing challenges, Republicans continue to waste time attempting to score political points:

Shutting Down the Export-Import Bank: “Conservatives who say the bank represents ‘crony capitalism’ won a six-month shutdown of the bank in June of last year.” [The Hill, [9/12/16](#)]

Voting to Repeal the Affordable Care Act: “[Republicans] voted to repeal the law—in whole or in part—dozens of times, yet they’ve never kept their many pledges to replace it.” [Atlantic, [6/22/16](#)]

Wasting Millions of Taxpayer Dollars on the Select Committee on Benghazi: “After spending more than two years and \$7 million, the House Select Committee on Benghazi released a report Tuesday that found — like eight investigations before it — no evidence of wrongdoing by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton or other members of the Obama administration.” [Huffington Post, [6/28/16](#)]

Attacking Women’s Health: “The House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives has yet to find any proof that anyone is selling or buying fetal tissue. After months of investigation and subpoenas for staggering amounts of records...the chairman and Republican members of the panel released an 88-page interim report this month that is long on innuendo but remarkably short on revelation.” [Los Angeles Times, [7/25/16](#)]

Failing to Hold Confirmation Hearings for a New Supreme Court Justice: “Judge Merrick Garland deserves, as any reasonable nominee deserves, a full hearing and a vote. For the Republicans who control the Senate to do less is to shame themselves and the institution they represent.” [Dallas Morning News Editorial, [3/16/16](#)]

Speaker Paul Ryan and Republican leaders claim they have a “Better Way,” yet they have consistently demonstrated their inability and unwillingness to govern, telling the American people: “you’re on your own.” Democrats will continue to highlight our vision for how Congress can work to renew the American peoples’ faith in government and ensure that everyone can Make It In America.